

PET(4)-14-12 : Tuesday 16 October 2012
P-04-344 : Freshwater East Public Sewer

Freshwater East Action Group against Public Sewer Installation

7th October 2012

Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales

We refer to your e-mail of 3rd October 2012. With it you attached a 'Briefing Note'. We assume that the Briefing Note was prepared by the Environment Agency but please inform us if our assumption is incorrect.

It is difficult to comment on the note without access to both the report being submitted to the Welsh Government and the letter referred to in the note which outlines the next steps to be taken in the S101a determination process. In addition we have not been sent a copy of the second survey despite asking for the same. This reluctance to communicate with the village reflects the way in which this matter has been handled from the beginning.

Having said that, we see from the note that both surveys concluded that the current septic tanks are having little impact on local water courses and that, such bacteria as was found was likely to be caused by farming rather than local homes. **This confirms what we have always believed.** It is a shame that such surveys were not carried out at the outset.

A lot of public money was spent on the Judicial Review procedure instigated by the Environment Agency concerning Welsh Water's change of mind about the need to provide an extended sewerage system in Freshwater East. The latest surveys suggest that that could have been avoided had a more rigorous scientific approach to the alleged pollution issue been adopted. We hope that both the Minister and the members of the Petitions Committee will want to ensure that both the Environment Agency and Welsh Water will learn lessons from this matter.

We understand from our communications with the Environment Agency that there has been some disagreement between the Minister's office and the Environment Agency as to who has to make the final decision in this matter. We trust that this will be resolved shortly. **We would ask the Petitions Committee to continue to keep a watching brief on this matter until we know the outcome and until acceptable arrangements have been made to hold a local public meeting to inform local residents of the outcome and the reasons for the final decision.**

We are most grateful for your continued assistance.
Yours sincerely,
Roy and Pat Thomas (for Action Group)